

Dr M rapped for emulating Anwar against Najib

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By Alyaa Azhar

Dr Mahathir Mohamad had been upset when his sacked former deputy Anwar Ibrahim aired his grouses to the foreign media, said Umno supreme council member Annuar Musa.

However, the former prime minister is now employing the same tactic in venting his dissatisfaction towards Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak.

Disappointed over Mahathir's remarks in The New York Times, Annuar (photo) said: "It's something that he used to dislike back then, when I was a cabinet member."

"He always mentioned how he was not happy when there were quarters, back then it was former deputy prime minister Anwar, who used the foreign media.

"I'm a bit confused. He is not practising what he used to preach," Annuar told reporters at the Majlis Amanah Rakyat (Mara) headquarters today.

In The New York Times interview published on June 17, Mahathir had described Umno as having "become a repository of patronage-seeking politicians".

He also said unqualified party leaders "try to keep out people who are more intelligent than themselves".

Dr M's right to question

Meanwhile, although Annuar said he was disappointed, he acknowledged that Mahathir had a right to voice his dissatisfaction.

"He remains a statesman, as someone whom we must respect. We can't brush him aside just like that.

"We cannot be rude to someone who has contributed a lot (to the country)," he said.

As such, Annuar said, the government must practise accountability in addressing the issues raised by anyone, regardless of who he or she is.

"If there is truth to what that has been raised by Mahathir, regard it as a reminder.

"I am impressed with how Najib has chosen not to be directly confrontational. Especially with the fasting month, it's better that we self-reflect ourselves.

"We must ensure that what we do is truly for the country's good. We cannot do something that might be good but through wrongful means," he said.

Citing Italian Renaissance writer Niccolo Machiavelli's "the ends justify the means", Annuar believes that the means are equally important.

"If the means are inappropriate, the repercussions might be severe," he said.

'Najib can refuse debate'

Meanwhile, commenting on Mahathir's latest challenge to Najib to a debate, Annuar said anyone had the right to challenge the prime minister.

"But the prime minister has also the right to choose whether he wants to accept the challenge or not," he said.

Annuar pointed out how Mahathir during his tenure as prime minister was luckier than Najib as Twitter and Facebook did not exist at the time.

"The challenges back then were fewer compared to the challenges faced by my friends in the cabinet today.

"If you say something wrong today, even kangkung and nasi goreng can become a problem," he said, chuckling.

Mahathir, during a closed-door meeting with several NGOs on Wednesday, said he was prepared to be grilled by Najib on his 22-year tenure.

He nevertheless said Najib must answer his questions too, in front of television cameras and be televised nationwide.

Najib has repeatedly refused to debate with Mahathir, and some of his ministers, like Tourism Minister Nazri Abdul Aziz, have also defended the Najib, saying a debate was not necessary.

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